

## **Cross-Cultural Competency for Consulting Psychologists**

In an increasingly diverse world, cross-cultural competency is fundamental to consulting psychology, whether it be for the organizations and individuals with whom consultations are occurring, or for the consultants themselves.

The need for cross-cultural competency is not new, as humans have been attempting to understand culture as long as there have been humans, such as when culturally diverse nomadic bands first encountered each other during prehistory--and the stakes have always been high, as the outcome of such encounters have often had life or death consequences.

There are many perspectives that can be used to understand culture, and to apply this knowledge through cross-cultural competency. Although psychology has much to offer, consulting psychologists also need to approach understanding culture from the vantage of related disciplines, such as anthropology and sociology, which are more central to its study. This presentation summarizes traditional psychological approaches to developing cross-cultural competency, but also exposes consulting psychologists to important concepts in these related disciplines. The focus will be on cultural dilemmas that occur during socio-cultural encounters involving two or more actors (either individuals, groups, or organizations) with divergent cultural values and viewpoints, and how these can be understood, negotiated, and even reconciled.

These perspectives are presented in terms of a framework using universal cultural dimensions that enable deeper appreciation for diversity. Emphasis is on learning cultural general, rather than specific, competencies, as no one can reasonably master all the specifics apt to occur in socio-cultural encounters but, once a conceptual framework is mastered, general patterns can become obvious. The presentation of these are illustrated through engaging case studies based on actual dilemmas faced by the author and his clients in many years of consulting across various cultural divides